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Atari Online News, Etc.
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->From the Editor’s Keyboard "Saying it like it is!"
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BURP!! Well, another Thanksgiving feast has come and gone; all that remains now are the containers of leftovers - plenty of ’em!! We celebrated quietly at home this year - just my wife and I, and the three "kids". The dogs were in turkey heaven, managing to beg for their share of whatever was available.

We checked in with our respective families to see how their celebrations fared - all was well with everyone. other than the typical gossip one usually manages during family conversations. Some things never seem to change!

So, here I sit, after two more meals of leftovers, and still enjoying it all. I hope that you all had a pleasant family gathering with plenty of good food and company. This is a great time for such festivities!

So, I really need to stretch out, loosen a notch or two in my belt to allow my repast to settle for a bit! Meanwhile, let’s get on with our latest issue!

Until next time...

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->A-ONE User Group Notes! - Meetings, Shows, and Info!
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Seattle Retro-Computing Society Meets Sat. Nov. 26th

Come one, come all, to the Seattle Retro-Computing Society’s monthly meeting, on Saturday, November 26th, 2011! You don’t want to miss this one -- it’s our last meeting until January 2012.

Do you do any of the following with old computers near Seattle?

+ Use, collect, and/or restore them
+ Play games on them

+ Write programs for them
+ Develop new hardware for them
+ Help other people do any of the above

If your answer was "yes," as I expect it will be if you're reading this near Seattle, then the SRCS is for you! We exist so you can show off your awesome stuff, bounce ideas off of fellow enthusiasts, and be inspired by one another's achievements, plans and aspirations.

No idea is too big or too small, and we're not picky about what flavor of vintage machine you prefer! Come on down and tell us about it!

Please note that, as it would fall on Christmas Eve and no one would attend, we will not be meeting in December. If you miss this meeting, you won't get to see everyone (and their nifty stuff) again until January.

The meetings are graciously hosted by the Living Computer Museum, which is gradually fitting out a computer museum in Seattle's SODO neighborhood. There will be refreshments, a Buy-Sell-Free-Trade table, and enough table space & power to set up anything you may want to show off!

For further details, please see our web page at http://www.seattleretrocomputing.com/ and our mailing list at http://groups.google.com/group/seattle-retrocomp . Hope to see you there!

Gordon "gsteemso" Steemson
SRCS agitator-in-chief

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->In This Week's Gaming Section - Xbox Live Users Scammed in Phishing Attack!
""""""""""""""""""""""""""""""""" Woman Pepper Sprays Walmart Shoppers!

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->A-ONE's Game Console Industry News - The Latest Gaming News!
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Xbox Live Users Scammed in Phishing Attack

Bringing back memories of the Sony PlayStation hack that compromised thousands of gamer accounts, some British Microsoft Xbox Live users have been scammed in a phishing attack. Although Microsoft insists its network has not been hacked, the phishers have nonetheless fooled some gamers into

disclosing credit-card information.

The Sun, a paper in the U.K., first reported that online crooks hacked into thousands of Xbox Live accounts to steal millions of dollars. The paper said the average catch was 100 British pounds, or a bit over $150 - but that many suffered losses of more than 200 pounds.

"Xbox Live has not been hacked. Microsoft can confirm that there has been no breach to the security of our Xbox Live service," Microsoft said in a statement. "In this case, a number of Xbox Live members appear to have recently been victim of malicious ’phishing’ scams."

News reports suggest some Xbox Live users received e-mails tricking them into visiting "spoofed" Web sites and entering their personal information, including their credit-card numbers. Microsoft said it consistently takes measures to protect Xbox Live against ever-changing threats, and listed three current initiatives. Those initiatives sound like a lesson in basic Internet security 101.

For example, Microsoft is warning people against opening unsolicited e-mails because the messages may contain spyware or other malware that can access personal information on their computer without their knowledge or permission. Microsoft is also reminding all customers that they should be very careful to keep all personal information secure whenever online and never supply e-mail addresses, passwords or credit card information to strangers.

Finally, Microsoft said it is working closely with Xbox Live users who have been in touch with the company to investigate and/or resolve any unauthorized changes to their accounts resulting from phishing scams.

"It looks like these phishers convinced gamers that they were visiting an Xbox site and got the users to give up IDs and passwords and their credit card numbers," said Rob Enderle, principal analyst at Enderle Group. "The bad guys got enough information to actually charge the credit card, then pulled in small amounts of money over a long period of time."

News reports have suggested the phishers convinced gamers to enter the information in exchange for reward points. Enderle expects most credit card companies will indemnify the victims if they dispute the charges.

"This story points to the typical warning for anyone using the Internet: If someone is representing themselves as the vendor, they already have your password and ID. They don’t have to ask you for it," Enderle said. "So it should be a red flag if anybody asks you for both your password or ID. Never provide it, even if the site looks to be safe."

Woman Pepper Sprays Walmart Shoppers To Get Discounted Xbox 360

Ten minutes before the Porter Ranch Walmart opened in Los Angeles, California, a mother of two used a can of pepper spray to attack other shoppers waiting in line for the early, Black Friday door-buster sales according to the Los Angeles Times. The woman was specifically looking to get the $100 discounted price on a Xbox 360 as well as a few Xbox 360 games. With both children in tow, she began spraying other customers as soon as the store employees started pulling packing plastic off the discounted items. Once the doors opened, the woman also used the pepper

spray to gain a favorable position over other customers competing for items. A witness at the attack posted on Twitter that customers were screaming about stinging eyes.

Los Angeles firefighters and the LAPD responded to the attack quickly and treated 20 injured customers that suffered from extreme swelling, coughing and redness of the face and eyes. One customer required further treatment at the local hospital. The woman fled the store soon after it opened and the LAPD are accessing Wal-Mart security footage to get a clear picture of the woman as well as video evidence of the attacks. Los Angeles Police Lt. Abel Parga called the attack "customer-versus-customer shopping rage" and mentioned that the LAPD plans to release the photo of the woman to the press shortly. The police are also looking into her method of payment to quickly track down the woman through a credit card or check payment.

Other Walmart locations around the nation also suffered from more violence according to CNN. In San Leandro, California, a man was shot during a robbery attempt while waiting in line for Black Friday deals. A similar robbery attempt happened Myrtle Beach, South Carolina where two customers suffered injuries during an armed robbery attempt. In Kinston, North Carolina, an off-duty officer working security during the Black Friday opening used pepper spray to halt a disturbance. In Southington, Connecticut, police had to use a stun gun on a shopper that was in an argument with other customers, likely over discounted merchandise.

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A-ONE’s Headline News
The Latest in Computer Technology News
Compiled by: Dana P. Jacobson

Obama Joins Google+

Google+, the Internet search giant’s rival to Facebook, has a high-profile new member: US President Barack Obama.

"Obama for America," the president’s 2012 reelection campaign, created an official Barack Obama page on Google+ on Wednesday.

"We’re still kicking the tires and figuring this out, so let us know what you’d like to see here and your ideas for how we can use this space to help you stay connected to the campaign," it said in its first message.

Last month, Obama added popular microblogging platform Tumblr to the Internet arsenal for his White House campaign.

During his 2008 presidential run, Obama relied heavily on the Internet for organizing, fundraising and communicating and he is expected to do so again during his reelection bid.

The White House is an active user of Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, Flickr, Foursquare and other online services.

Gates Testifies in $1B Lawsuit Against Microsoft

Microsoft’s Bill Gates returns to the witness stand Tuesday to defend his company against a $1 billion antitrust lawsuit that claims the software giant tricked a competitor into huge losses and soared onto the market with Windows 95.

Utah-based Novell Inc. sued Microsoft in 2004. The company says Gates duped them into thinking he would include its WordPerfect writing program in the new Windows system, then backed out because he feared it was too good.

Novell said it was later forced to sell WordPerfect for a $1.2 billion loss.

Gates testified Monday that Microsoft was racing to put out Windows 95 when he dropped technical features that would no longer support the rival’s word processor because engineers warned it would crash the system.

Windows 95 was a major innovation, and Gates said he had his mind on larger issues.

"We worked super hard. It was the most challenging, trying project we had ever done," the Microsoft co-founder said. "It was a ground-breaking piece of work, and it was very well received when we got it done."

Gates said Novell just couldn’t deliver a Windows 95 compatible WordPerfect program in time for rollout, and its own Word program was actually better. He said that by 1994, Microsoft Word was rated No. 1 in the market above WordPerfect.

WordPerfect once had nearly 50 percent of the market for computer writing programs, but its share quickly plummeted to less than 10 percent as Microsoft’s own office programs took hold.

Microsoft lawyers say Novell’s loss of market share was its own doing because the company didn’t develop a Windows compatible WordPerfect program until months after the operating system’s rollout.

Gates called it an "important win" in an email to executives.

Attorneys for Novell, a wholly owned subsidiary of The Attachmate Group as a result of a merger earlier this year, concede that Microsoft was under no legal obligation to provide advance access to Windows 95 so Novell could prepare a compatible version. The Redmond, Wash.-based company, however, enticed Novell to work on a version, only to withdraw support months before Windows 95 hit the market, Novell attorney Jeff Johnson said.

Microsoft lawyer David Tulchin argued that Novell’s missed opportunity was its own fault, and that Microsoft had no obligation to give a competitor a leg up.

U.S. District Judge J. Frederick Motz late Monday denied Microsoft’s request to dismiss the case. He said Novell’s claims appeared thin but that he would let the case continue another month and allow a jury to decide.

Gates was the first witness to testify Monday in his company's defense after a month-long case by Novell. Cross-examination begins Tuesday.

Gates, a billionaire, began by testifying about Microsoft's history. He was just 19 when he helped found the company. Today, Microsoft is one of the world's largest software makers, with a market value of more than $210 billion.

"We thought everybody would have a personal computer on every desk and in every home," Gates said. "We wanted to be there and be the first."

EU Court: Countries Can't Impose Internet Filters

An EU court says Internet service providers cannot be required to install filters that would prevent the illegal downloading of files.

The ruling is a blow to artists who had sought to have their intellectual property rights protected that way.

SABAM, a Belgian company representing writers, composers and editors, established in 2004 that users of an Internet service provider called Scarlet Extended SA were illegally transferring files. A Belgian court ordered Scarlet to install at its own expense a system to make that impossible.

But the Court of Justice of the European Union ruled Thursday that this would require monitoring of all electronic communications of all of Scarlet's customers, infringing on their rights, and violated EU law.

Microsoft Signs Agreement To Scrutinize Yahoo

It looks as if Microsoft wants a seat at the negotiating table if Yahoo decides to sell part or all of its business.

To gain better access, Microsoft Corp. has signed a nondisclosure agreement with Yahoo Inc., according to a person familiar with the situation. The person spoke to The Associated Press on Wednesday on the condition of anonymity because the agreement hasn't been formally announced.

The DealReporter and The New York Times earlier reported the arrangement between Microsoft and Yahoo.

Yahoo's board has been mulling the company's options since firing CEO Carol Bartz in early September. The alternatives include selling Yahoo's Asian assets, such as the Alibaba Group in China, and auctioning off the company in its entirety instead of hiring a new CEO. Tim Morse, Yahoo's chief financial officer, has been interim CEO since Bartz's ouster.

The DealReporter said that Yahoo's board is scheduled to meet next week to discuss its next step.

Microsoft unsuccessfully tried to buy Yahoo in 2008 for as much as $47.5 billion before walking away in frustration. Yahoo's stock is worth less

than half of Microsoft’s last offer of $33 per share.

The New York Times reported that Microsoft is primarily interested in protecting its Internet search advertising alliance with Yahoo if its partner pursues a sale or a dramatic reorganization. Microsoft currently provides most of the search technology on Yahoo’s website in return for 12 percent of the ad revenue generated from the results.

To preserve its business relationship with Yahoo, Microsoft already had explored contributing to a joint bid for Yahoo’s U.S. assets with some of the buyout firms that have been considering making offers. That list includes Silver Lake Partners, Providence Equity Partners and the Texas Pacific Group.

Alibaba CEO Jack Ma has publicly acknowledged that his company would like to buy Yahoo, but that could be difficult because of U.S. government concerns about a Chinese business owning a U.S. company that handles email and other electronic communications.

HP Results Show Challenge for Whitman

HP’S TROUBLES: Hewlett-Packard Co.’s first earnings report with Meg Whitman as CEO highlights the troubles she faces in setting a new course for the besieged company.

HP’s PERFORMANCE: The latest quarterly numbers beat Wall Street’s subdued expectations. Net income fell 91 percent. Revenue fell 3 percent. But the forecast for the 2012 fiscal year left something to be desired, in Wall Street’s eyes.

WHAT THE RESULTS MEAN: The results underscore the challenge facing Whitman, who must wrestle with one of technology’s oldest companies amid management dysfunction and economic malaise.

British Police Investigating Climate Email Hackers

British police will examine a batch of email exchanges between climate scientists which appeared on the Internet Tuesday as part of an inquiry into the hacking of the private documents, police said Wednesday.

The University of East Anglia, whose Climate Action Research Unit is considered one of the world’s leading institutions on climate science, said the emails appeared to be "a carefully-timed attempt to reignite controversy over the science behind climate change."

Negotiators from almost 200 countries meet from November 28 in South Africa for a U.N. climate summit, where only modest steps are expected toward a deal on cutting greenhouse gas emissions despite warnings from scientists that extreme weather will likely increase as the planet warms.

An anonymous group or individual called FOIA posted a file on a Russian server, http://files.sinwt.ru/download.phpfile=25FOIA2011.zip, which included more than 5,000 emails.

Two years ago, a series of emails written by climate experts from the university were stolen by unknown hackers and spread across the Internet in what became known as "Climategate," just before a U.N. climate summit in Copenhagen.

The leaked emails contained private correspondence from 1995 to 2009. Climate change skeptics claimed they showed scientists manipulating data to support global warming.

However, independent inquiries cleared the university of all accusations of fraud and data manipulation, although they did recommend it change the way it handled requests for information.

"We are aware of the release of the document cache. The contents will be of interest to our investigation which is ongoing," said police spokeswoman Nicola Atter.

"Nothing so far leads us to believe the emails raise any new issues. If, on closer study, we see anything that requires further investigation, that we will do," Edward Acton, vice chancellor of the university, told reporters Wednesday.

"It may throw more light on the perpetrator rather than the victims of this invasion of privacy. I am very keen to know who did it," he added.

Police would not reveal information about suspects but said it was following "all lines of enquiry, some of which have been international in nature."

Acton said the way numbers appeared, using full stops instead of commas, was uncommon among British or American English speakers.

In addition to the 5,000 emails released Tuesday, there are another 39,000 pages which cannot be accessed yet as they require a password, the vice-chancellor said.

Those seen so far include quotes on discussions between scientists over how to portray climate data, the workings of the U.N.’s Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and how to share information.

"I have looked at 100 or so and those highlighted are quite cherry-picked (...) They are quite representative of frank and honest discussion between scientists," said Phil Jones, head of the university unit.

In a statement immediately after the emails appeared on the Internet Tuesday, the university said: "This appears to be a carefully-timed attempt to reignite controversy over the science behind climate change when that science has been vindicated by three separate independent inquiries and a number of studies."

Inmates Harass Victims Via Facebook

Lisa Gesik hesitates to log into her Facebook account nowadays because of unwanted "friend" requests, not from long-ago classmates but from the ex-husband now in prison for kidnapping her and her daughter.

Neither Gesik nor prison officials can prove her ex-husband is sending her

the messages, which feature photos of him wearing his prison blues and dark sunglasses, arms crossed as he poses in front of a prison gate. It doesn’t matter if he’s sending them or someone else is - the Newport, Ore., woman is afraid and, as the days tick down to his January release, is considering going into hiding with her 12-year-old daughter.

"It’s just being victimized all over again," she said.

Across the U.S. and beyond, inmates are using social networks and the growing numbers of smartphones smuggled into prisons and jails to harass their victims or accusers and intimidate witnesses. California corrections officials who monitor social networking sites said they have found many instances in which inmates taunted victims or made unwanted sexual advances.

Like Gesik’s case, it’s often difficult for authorities to determine for sure who’s sending the threatening material and the few people caught rarely face serious consequences.

"The ability to have these kinds of contacts is increasing exponentially. In many ways, the law has not caught up with these changing technologies," said Rob Bovett, an Oregon district attorney whose office prosecuted Gesik’s ex-husband, Michael Gladney.

Timothy Heaphy, U.S. attorney for the Western District of Virginia, said criminals’ use of social networks to reach witnesses has made his job harder.

"We deal every day with witnesses who are afraid of being identified," he said. "If there are increased instances where folks who are incarcerated can reach outside the walls of the jail, that’s going to make it more difficult for us to get cooperation."

In a rare victory, Heaphy’s office successfully prosecuted John Conner and Whitney Roberts after they set up a Facebook account that Conner used to intimidate witnesses preparing to testify against him on charges of burning two houses to punish a girlfriend and collect the insurance.

"How the hell can u b a gangsta when u snitchin and lien...," said a post from the pair that publicly exposed one witness who cooperated with law enforcement, according to federal court records.

The issue has emerged as cell phones have proliferated behind bars. In California, home to the nation’s largest inmate population, the corrections department confiscated 12,625 phones in just 10 months this year. Six years ago, they found just 261. The number of phones confiscated by the federal Bureau of Prisons has doubled since 2008, to 3,684 last year.

Noting the increase, California legislators approved a law bringing up to six months in jail for corrections employees or visitors who smuggle mobile devices into state prisons, while inmates caught with the phones can now lose up to 180 days of early-release credit. But no additional time is added to their sentence, minimizing the deterrence factor.

In the old days, those behind bars would have to enlist a relative or friend to harass or intimidate to get around no-contact orders. Social networks now cut out the middle man.

In Gesik’s case, Gladney used to harass her the old-fashioned way, sending

letters and making phone calls through third parties. The Facebook harassment began in June.

Gesik, 44, got prison officials to contact Facebook to remove that account, only to have another message appearing to be from him in September. This time, there was a different spelling of his last name.

"I figure, if he’s done all this from in prison, what’s he’s going to do when he gets out?" Gesik said.

A gap in state law meant that "no contact" orders like the one Gesik obtained against Gladney were deemed not to apply to anyone in custody, said Bovett, the prosecutor. "So they could do these very creative ways of reaching victims through third parties," he said.

Last June, Oregon legislators approved a law prohibiting inmates from contacting their domestic violence victims from behind bars.

In California, prison officials are working with Facebook to identify inmate accounts and take them down. But that only generally happens only after the damage is done.

Karen Carrisosa, who lives in a Sacramento suburb, was aghast when officials found Facebook postings from Corcoran State Prison inmate Fredrick Garner. Garner is serving a 22-year, involuntary manslaughter sentence for killing her husband, 50-year-old Larry Carrisosa, outside a church 11 years ago.

"My kids, they go on Facebook, I go on Facebook, and what if they decide to look us up?" Carrisosa said.

She was alerted by a Sacramento television station that Garner was posting messages to his mother and others. Garner was punished with a 30-day reduction in his early release credits for possessing a forbidden cell phone and has since been transferred to Salinas Valley State Prison.

Hector Garcia Jr. used a smuggled smart phone hidden in his cell at Kern Valley State Prison to rally support on Facebook for an inmate hunger strike this summer that sought improved living conditions for gang leaders housed in special secure cellblocks.

"Starving for my better future," he posted, according a July 1 screen grab from the corrections department. "Let’s do this ... statewide..."

The discovery rattled Isabel Gutierrez. Garcia murdered one of her sons and wounded another in January 2005. Now Gutierrez fears her own social-networking left her vulnerable.

"I panicked," she said. "My photos are up of my family and my grandkids. I felt like they can see into my world."

Guards found Garcia’s phone, punishing him with a 30-day cut in early-release credits and 30 days’ loss of yard, TV and radio privileges.

Attorneys who represented Garcia and Gladney in their previous criminal trials did not return phone calls seeking comment on behalf of their former clients.

’Password’ Tops The List of Worst Passwords for 2011

These days there are so many sites and accounts you need to log into that it is hard to think of new, unique passwords. So often, when it comes down to creating a new password people either use the same password over and over again or create easy to remember passwords (or both).

According to password management application maker SplashID, some of the most commonly used passwords for 2011 are "password," "123456," "12345678," "qwerty," "abc123" and "monkey."

Many of these passwords keep re-appearing in the list of common passwords year after year, signaling that people either can t be bothered to change their passwords or don t understand the importance of keeping their online identities safe.

"If you’re one of those people who thought it was clever to use "password" as your password, it’s time to wisen up and make a change. Switching the "o" to a zero to make it passw0rd ? Not much better," advised SplashID.

By using simple numerical passwords or short common words as your password, you re making it easy for computers or cybercriminals to break into your accounts.

"Hackers can easily break into many accounts just by repeatedly trying common passwords," warned SplashID CEO Morgan Slain. "Even though people are encouraged to select secure, strong passwords, many people continue to choose weak, easy-to-guess ones, placing themselves at risk from fraud and identity theft."

Slain added, "[w]hat you don’t want is a password that is easily guessable. If you have a password that is short or common or a word in the dictionary, it’s like leaving your door open for identity thieves."

Microsoft advises that the keys to creating strong passwords are "length and complexity" on its Safety and Security Center website. Lifehacker suggests using multi-word phrases with spaces - which are much easier to remember - to make your passwords more secure (rather than using a more risky six-character-only password).

Want to know how long it would take a desktop computer to crack your password? Test it with http://howsecureismypassword.net/.

SplashID identified the most commonly used passwords list for 2011 by trawling through files "containing millions of stolen passwords" that were posted online by hackers.

The top 25 most commonly used passwords for 2011 according to SplashID:

password
123456
12345678
qwerty
abc123
monkey
1234567
letmein
trustno1
dragon

baseball
111111
iloveyou
master
sunshine
ashley
bailey
passw0rd
shadow
123123
654321
superman
qazwsx
michael
football

Tech-Savvy Users Urged To Stop Shopping, Eating on Update Your Parents' Browser Day

Hoping to peruse the web for cheap deals on Black Friday? Before you do, think of your parents!

On November 25, the technology world is challenging people to help out their parents by installing the most up to date versions of web browsers on their computer during "Update your Parents Browser Day."

The initiative was started by The Atlantic in the US in a post that asserts "[t]hese browsers must be upgraded. Do it for the web developers. Do it for the designers. Do it for your parents. On Friday, November 25, every old web browser must go."

Security company Sophos agrees with the holiday sentiment and writes "If you are wondering why you are doing this, remember it is the time of year for giving. You will be helping to make the internet a better place and help them from getting hit by something nasty" on its Naked Security blog.

Microsoft advises that you should follow these three rules when updating your parent s browser:

Never check browser history
Never look at the auto-complete answers
Always upload funny Facebook statuses in their open browsers

Lifehacker also provides some helpful tips on how to switch your parents' web browser without them knowing, including changing the shortcut s icon, importing their bookmarks and making the user interface look more like their old browser.

Lifehacker suggest that you choose a self-updating browser such as Chrome or Firefox so you don t have to worry about updating it again.

While you re providing tech help for your parents you should point them in the direction of Google s Teach Parents Technology website, where they will find some handy, easy-to-understand public service videos on basic technology, the World Wide Web, communication and media.

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